



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **INITIATIVES COMBATTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING CLEAR ASSEMBLY** *Bills provide grants to help victims, and prevention education for students, teachers, and school staff*

MADISON, WI... Legislation to fight human trafficking with prevention education in our schools and grants to help victims passed the State Assembly unanimously today.

“Sex trafficking, and sexual exploitation of minors especially, is among the most heinous forms of abuse,” said State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere), co-author of the measures along with State Rep. Jerry O’Connor. “These initiatives will foster awareness and increase our efforts to stop sex trafficking before it begins, and help victims get their lives back.”

Sen. Jacque said human trafficking is not only a major concern in Wisconsin, which serves as a hub for the entire Midwest due to its interstate corridors, but studies show that over 70 percent of sex trafficking begins while the victim is a minor.

“As several Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) investigators have relayed to me, pimps seek out victims to exploit when they are most vulnerable,” Sen. Jacque said. “While Wisconsin has closed several loopholes in the legal system abused by perpetrators, we now need to raise awareness of those being solicited.”

### Child Sex Trafficking Prevention Education ([Assembly Bill 977](#))

Sen. Jacque said the bill requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with the Department of Children and Families, to develop model curriculum and instructional materials for grades 6 to 12 on human trafficking prevention, and help schools identify victims among their students.

“Thirty-Eight states, including our neighbors Michigan, Illinois and Minnesota, already have similar, broader K-12 child sexual abuse training and curriculum requirements from having adopted an initiative like ‘Erin’s Law’, which I introduced for Wisconsin earlier this session,” Sen. Jacque said.

### Human Trafficking Victim Services Grant Program ([Assembly Bill 979](#))

Sen. Jacque said this bill will help victims of sex trafficking by establishing a pilot program that will provide fifty percent matching funds up to \$2.5 million over two years to assist victim support organizations in providing the critical care services - such as food, job training, and housing - needed to help individuals escape this bondage and lead free, independent lives. These funds would be supplemented further, in addition to reducing demand for sex trafficking and supporting ICAC task forces, by legislation (2023 AB 79) instituting higher financial penalties on those involved in the trafficking that is still in need of an Assembly floor vote before the end of session.

“I am pleased the Legislature, on a bipartisan basis, is recognizing the need for the State of Wisconsin to combat human trafficking,” Sen. Jacque said. “This effort is about putting an end to sexual exploitation in our state and restoring human dignity to victims.”

AB 979 passed by a vote of 96-0, and AB 977 passed by unanimous voice vote. The bills must next clear the Senate and be signed by the Governor to become law.

*Senator André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin’s First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.*